

**Resolution and Action on Agenda Items
Idaho Fish and Game Commission Meeting
Dec. 4, 2003**

Fish Research Facility, Nampa, ID

Commissioners Hadley, Irby, Watts, Wood, Gibbs, Wheeler, Burns, attending.

Items in these notes may be in different order than the agenda.

1. Opening comments, chairman Irby.
2. Review of Dec. 3 Public Comment
3. Agenda changes
4. Director's report, Steve Huffaker. Written report was distributed to commission earlier. Highlights are Steve Yundt's transfer to Office of Species Conservation; work on wolf delisting; possible ESA listing for slickspot peppergrass.
5. Commission reports.
6. Election of 2004 commission chair, vice-chair
Action: Wood nominates Hadley for chair Gibbs moves to close the nominations, Wood seconds. Unanimous.
Action: Wheeler nominates Watts for vice-chair, Wood moves to close the nominations, Hadley seconds. Unanimous
7. Consent Calendar, Financial Report; approval of minutes of meetings of October 2-3 and Oct. 8; budget adjustment for Bureau of Wildlife to study genetic sampling in two Clearwater Region game management units to generate estimates of mountain lion and black bear abundance. Funding of \$20,000 is pledged by Safari Club International.
Action: Wood moves, Hadley seconds to adopt the consent calendar. Unanimous.
8. Wild turkey rules, Don Kemner. Turkey populations and hunter participation continue to increase in Idaho; harvest has increased from 487 in 1992 to over 5,000 in 2003 and sales of turkey tags have increased from 2,002 in 1992 to over 20,000 in 2003. Staff wants to increase hunting opportunity, including youth hunting opportunity, simplify rules and tags and reduce turkey population growth in areas with depredation complaints. All regions had open houses and the Department website had an input page on the proposed turkey rules. Input was also taken, with the majority negative, on a proposal to approve rifles as a method of take, which was **not** proposed by staff. Staff also proposed eliminating the spring controlled hunt tags and establishing two types of tags, "general" and "extra" turkey tags and got wide public support. A general tag could be used in a controlled hunt by the holder of a controlled hunt permit. A general tag and two extra tags may be purchased each year. In the spring, an extra tag would be valid starting May 1 and could be used in the fall if not filled in the spring. General tags would cost \$18, extra tags \$12; junior/disabled American veteran/senior tags would be \$9.75. Spring seasons open Apr. 15 with a youth hunt added the weekend prior to the opener. Spring controlled hunts would have increased numbers of permits and most hunts would be extended. There are three new hunts in Unit 71. In 71 and 77 there are Youth hunts planned. Fall hunts have no changes proposed.
Action: Wood moves, Gibbs seconds to adopt the rules as proposed. Unanimous.
9. Classification and protection of wildlife report, Chuck Harris. Idaho Code 36-201 authorizes the Commission to define by classification or reclassification all wildlife within the state of Idaho (with the exception of those defined as predatory animals). IDFG Policy

No. FW-1.00 (Classification and Protection of Wildlife) has not been updated since 28 September 1990, and IDAPA 13.01.06 – Classification and Protection of Wildlife has not been updated since 1 July 1993. Changes need to be made to: (1) reflect current taxonomy; (2) make additions or deletions to the lists of threatened and endangered species and species of special concern; and (3) revise species of special concern definitions to be more consistent with the Idaho Conservation Data Center ranking methodology and new (2003) BLM and Forest Service sensitive species lists. Recommends a review every two years rather than waiting more than ten.

10. As part of the rulemaking process, Commission rules which have been promulgated as Temporary/Proposed rules need to be adopted (or ratified) as Pending Rules. The Pending Rules move on to Legislative review. If approved by the Legislature, the Pending Rules become Final Rules at the end of the 2004 Legislative Session. The Office of Statewide Administrative Rules allowed the Department to combine a number of rulemaking actions into four Dockets (to save costs). This is a normal part of the rulemaking process under the Idaho Administrative Procedures Act, and is required for these Dockets to proceed on to Final Rules. The Commission then has to vote on the Pending Rule dockets to make them Final Rules.

Action: Hadley moves, Wood seconds to adopt. Unanimous

11. Lake Cascade Renovation proposal report, Al Van Vooren. Update on the ongoing public input and environmental impact statement processes for the proposed draining and restocking with perch and trout at Lake Cascade. Water modeling must show that irrigators can get their water the next year or the proposal is dead. Modeling is ongoing with Bureau of Reclamation.
12. Wolf Status Report, Steve Nadeau. The legislature passed a joint resolution in 2002 accepting the Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. *House Bill 294* was implemented in spring 2003 by the Idaho Legislature to allow the Department of Fish and Game's involvement in wolf recovery. The Fish and Game Commission adopted a Wolf Policy in July 2003. The direction to staff has been to begin the planning, training, and transition necessary to implement the Wolf Plan upon delisting and to participate in wolf management statewide prior to delisting. This winter, staff will continue to develop wolf management strategies and train regional staff to participate in wolf management. Staff will also begin hiring temporary personnel based on available funding and needs to supplement increased workload requirements for regional and bureau personnel. Staff will also participate with Montana, Wyoming and the FWS to continue delisting efforts. Ongoing work with the Tribe to develop a functional MOA will also continue. Part of planning will address how the Nez Perce Tribe will interact with the state in wolf harvest and management. Planning may also include the ESA Sec. 10(j) proposal by OSC to manage under the Wolf Plan prior to delisting. Wolf management strategies will have to be developed by staff and reviewed and presented to the commission for consideration during the coming year. Funding issues will be addressed. Many public presentations, press releases, conference presentations, and media contacts have been conducted in the last year by Department staff. Development of specific management strategies will require extensive public involvement. There are 352 wolves in Idaho. 33 documented packs, 25 breeding pairs. 91 pups were produced and survived. There are 16 new packs this year and 17 wolves died. Over the past three years an average of 11 cows and 39 sheep have been killed annually by wolves.

13. Internet option for the Hunter Education course, Ron Fritz. Background: The Hunter Ed staff has identified a huge need to provide Idaho's residents with an Internet option for completing the Independent Study hunter education course. Since January 1, 2003 student registrations for the Idaho Hunter Education Course have increased dramatically straining our instructor resources and ability to offer enough classes to meet public demand. Several regions have experienced almost a one-third-student increase over last year. Also, newer technologies and concepts such as distance learning, which provide viable learning alternatives, have evolved. The Internet option would provide an alternative to the current Independent Study Course, which may be completed in lieu of the classroom portion of our current traditional course. Students selecting this alternative receive a CD-ROM (published by the now defunct Top Hook) and a student manual/workbook published by Outdoor Empire Publishing, Inc. (OEP), which they must complete independently and return to the instructor. To complete the certification process students must then complete a 6-8 hour instructor-led session consisting of some Idaho specific information and review material, the state's final exam and a field / live fire exercise. Students also receive course materials normally distributed in the conventional classroom courses. A 1999 Hunter Education Program Profile completed by the International Hunters Education Association (IHEA) revealed that at least 26 states and/or Canadian provinces offered independent study alternatives for their hunter education courses. Many include online course options. **Justification:** We frequently receive inquiries regarding the availability of an online independent study course. The opportunity to complete hunter education via independent, online study and an eight-hour field day vs. the traditional classroom course, which averages 20 hours, appeals to many state residents. Furthermore, instructors could complete at least two of the independent study Final Testing and Field Day Sessions in the time frame of one traditional course. Establishing this online, independent study course would not only better utilize our instructor resources but also enable us to proactively respond to public demand by providing with an additional course option. Additionally, traditional classroom students could use the online course as a voluntary, supplemental learning tool. Many of the staff and instructors who have previewed the online course favor the establishment of this Internet course option.
14. Hunter Education Awards. Dan Papp will make the presentations. He will have written information on each of the individuals to be recognized with the "continuing our heritage" award.

RECIPIENTS OF THE 2002 HUNTER EDUCATION "CONTINUING OUR HERITAGE" AWARD:

(showing year certified as an instructor)

James Allen 5/1994 Boise
Gary Gillespie 5/1994 Boise
Larry Huter 2/1998 Nampa
Lyle Mettler 10/1996 Emmett
Garth Newman 01/1989 Boise
John Rydman 02/1995 Boise
Rod Tegethoff 04/1985 New Plymouth
Mike Hunter 07/1981 Middleton
John Collins 03/1999 Boise

15. 2003 Reservist of the Year Award Mary Dudley, volunteer coordinator. Carol Wike is the recipient of this award. Carol first volunteered with the Department eight and a half years ago, hiking up Deadman Creek to plant bitterbrush on the 1992 Foothills Fire. Carol has contributed more than 1,500 hours serving as a reservist for the past three and a half years. Carol is one of the Idaho Bird Observatory's most active volunteers, assisting biologists with nearly all aspects of the project during the spring, summer and fall. Carol serves as a crew leader on dozens of habitat restoration planting projects, supervising inexperienced volunteers. We very much appreciate Carol's leadership, dedication and willingness to "go the extra mile" time after time! THANK YOU, CAROL!
16. Fire and Fish Habitat report by Dr. Bruce Rieman, Project Leader for Aquatic Sciences Laboratory, U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station, Boise Aquatic Sciences Lab. Increased fuel loads on forest land have increased the likelihood of extremely hot fires. Which is the greater risk, fire or what we do trying to manage the fire? Sediments in streams caused by fires have short-term impact but are also contributing to productive habitats in the long term.
17. Access Yes! Program and Funding, Brad Compton. In the latest public input process, with nearly 800 responses, we learned the majority knew little about Access Yes; the majority wanted an access program, the majority thought hunters and anglers should pay; the majority thought department programs should not be reduced to pay for it; the majority favored donations or lottery of supertag to pay for it. Commission decides to vote on each of several options. (yes votes are shown first) Voluntary donations: all in favor; lottery: 4-3; user fee: none in favor, license fee increase of \$1: all in favor; further reduce dept. activities: 6-1; auction of supertags: five opposed. Huffaker asks if what the commission wants is to continue to fund the program at the present level until there is a chance of getting a fee increase. Hadley clarifies that the program should be funded at \$100,000 to \$300,000. FY04 program budget for \$300,000 is in legislation now.

Watts suggests using the existing money up to 300,000 for 04, existing and a donation checkoff for 05, existing, checkoff and lottery for 06; and a fee increase with 3-year phase in \$1 in 07, \$1.50 in 08 and \$2 in 09.

Action: Wood moves, Hadley seconds that save for pending legislation in this session the commission will honor the promise to not seek a fee increase until 2006. Passes with Wheeler opposed.

Action Wood moves, Wheeler seconds to approve fundraising mechanism of seeking donations; sale of lottery tags and at some future time, a fee increase. Wood withdrew the motion.

Watts suggests using the existing money up to 300,000 for 04, existing and a donation checkoff for 05, existing, checkoff and lottery for 06; and the number for lottery tags subject to an approved plan brought by the staff.

Action Wood moves, Wheeler seconds to approve fundraising mechanism of seeking donations; sale of lottery tags and at some future time, a fee increase. Unanimous. The intent is that the staff will bring the commission a plan in January 04.

18. Southwest Region Overview, Al Van Vooren. Overview with additional info on Garden Valley winter feeding, access and habitat strategies at Andrus WMA and Rocking M Easement and warmwater fisheries management. Presenters included Jeff Dillon Anna Owsiak and Lester McDonald.

19. Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board Report, Jake Howard, Exec. Dir. Of the Board and Ray Lyon IDFG rep on the board. Licensing time is now three days, and working to get online licensing. Introduces IOGLB enforcement chief B.J. Snooks. The Board will have a fee increase before the legislature this year. Board has developed a new policy, which will help return unsold allocated tags to IDFG earlier, thus expediting sale to the public.
20. Land Acquisition, lot next to the Upper Snake office, Steve Barton.

Background:

The Upper Snake Region completed the move to the new regional office at 4279 Commerce Circle in Idaho Falls on October 24, 2003. The new regional office was purchased by the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and is shared with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. The lot size of the new regional office is 1.55 acres. This proposal is to acquire an adjacent lot for badly needed employee and public parking.

The old Upper Snake Regional Office location included two open bay sheds and a climate-controlled warehouse. The new Regional Office location is smaller and only allowed for the re-installation of one of the open bay sheds. The resultant small enclosed compound is insufficient for storage of equipment and vehicles used on a regular basis. This situation can easily be rectified with the acquisition of Lot 6 located adjacent to Lot 7 where the Upper Snake Regional Office is located. The acquisition of **Lot 6 would add another 1.55 acres for a grand total of 3.1 acres**. The existing fenced compound could eventually be expanded to include a portion of Lot 6.

At the present time there is not enough parking for IDFG and IDPR employees and the public. Employees are currently parking on adjacent lots (owned by others), in the fenced compound, or on the street. There are currently only 13 designated public parking spots plus 2 handicapped parking spots at the new office. The new office will be used for all Idaho Falls Hunter Safety classes and for public meetings. Currently there is not enough parking to accommodate the public. The addition of Lot 6 next door would provide the necessary space to create an expanded parking lot.

The owner of Lot 6 does not want to split the lot. The current asking price is **\$60,000**. Funds from the sale of the old Regional Office (RO) could provide the funding for this acquisition. Idaho State University has submitted a proposal to purchase the old RO over time. ISU's proposal is conditioned on approval by the State Board of Education.

Action: Wheeler moves, Watts seconds to approve the purchase. Unanimous.

21. Proof of residency rule, Jeff Seward, proposal would change the rules to allow two, rather than three identifying documents or a residency affidavit to be used to establish residency for buying licenses and tags. A drivers' license is still required if the applicant drives.

Action: Burns moves, Wood seconds to adopt the proposal.

22. 2004 meeting schedule January, Boise; March, Boise; April, Riggins; May – Conf. Call; July, St. Maries; August, Conf. Call; Sept. 30/Oct. 1, Challis; Dec., Boise.